THE

UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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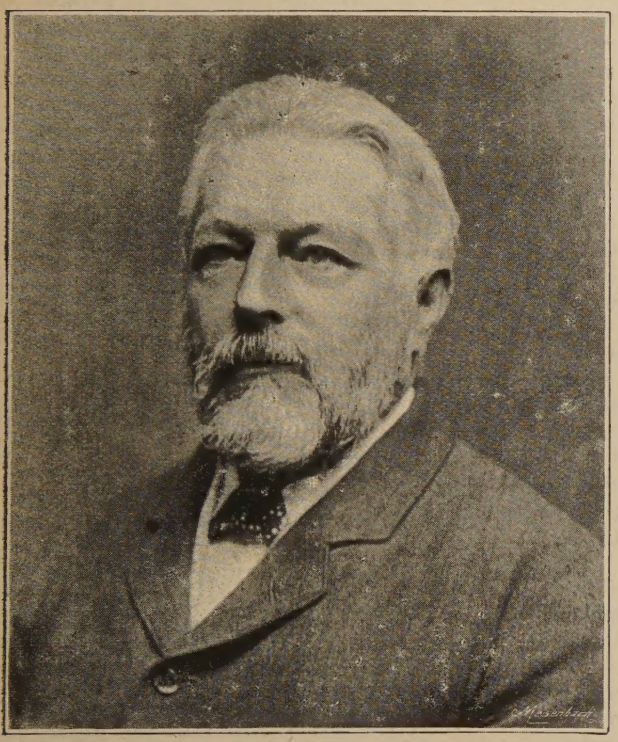

THE LATE MR. HENRY BLESSLEY.

Born at Portsmouth, 1831; died March 1st, 1907; for about 60 years a Sunday school teacher, and 22 years chapel secretary in connection with the High Street Unitarian Congregation, Portsmouth; 18½ years secretary of the Southern Unitarian Association; long a member of the Council of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association; a useful lay preacher; and some years a hard-working member of the Portsmouth School Board. After the High Street Unitarian Congregation acquired the tenement in which John Pounds had lived and taught, Mr. Blessley became the founder and teacher of the "John Pounds" Sunday Afternoon Ragged School for Boys, and afterwards chairman of committee of the "John Pounds" Training Home for Girls. He was also on the committee of the Royal Portsmouth and Gosport Hospital. A staunch Liberal in politics, he filled the office of secretary to the Portsmouth Liberal Association, and continued afterwards an active member of its executive. While on dockyard service for the Government at Malta, he visited Egypt and Palestine, and the knowledge thus gained concerning the scenes associated with the life of Jesus, he was never weary afterwards of making as real as possible to the Sunday scholars among whom he laboured. He has been described as "a true and unswerving Unitarian, attached by the strongest ties to his religious faith, and interested in its highest and broadest developments." Truly his record has been of the best. His face was long a familiar one at the Whit-week Anniversary meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Sunday School Association, and other Unitarian organisations, held in London. He was one of those exceptionally sturdy supporters and faithful workers in the reasonable Faith who are the life and soul of its movement, and without whom there would be no movement at all. To a word of reverent gratitude for such a life the testimony may well be added: "Well done! thou hast been faithful!"

"Thou lovest all; thy erring child may be
Lost to himself, but never lost to thee!
All souls are thine; the wings of morning bear
None from that presence which is everywhere,
Nor hell itself can hide, for thou art there."
—Whittier.

Deprive a skilful carpenter of his tool-chest, and he becomes helpless: he can do nothing. Does that prove that the carpenter is the result of his tool-chest? The body is the tool-chest which the soul uses; it is helpless without it; but it does not follow from that that the soul is the result of he body.
—J. Freeman Clarke.

"The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast,
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to heaven the rest."

In a Cathedral.

From paths that lead away from thee
I seek again thy open door;
What words of hope hast thou for me,
O church so loved in days of yore?

I listen as the preacher prays,
And many holy words there be;
But hard the narrow creed he says,
And strange his intoned litany.

The chanted strains now low, now loud,
Fall on my unaccustomed ear;
I kneel among the kneeling crowd,
Alas! the only doubter here.

I doubt that God, the great, the good,
Is swayed by mortal's hasty cry;
That angry or that jealous mood
Inclines the Ruler of the sky;

I doubt that frail and erring man,
Whate'er he be, where'er he came,
When he fulfils life's little plan,
Is doomed to endless woe and shame;

That little children fair and bright,
Who come with outstretched hands to me,
Have inborn taint of sin to blight
Their dawn of spotless purity.

I doubt all this, but I believe,
With ardent and with glowing joy,
That warp and weft of earth shall weave
In each a truer destiny.

That somewhere man and child shall meet
In God's great universe of love,
The eager and the weary feet
Find rest at last in heaven above. E.S.

For All or None.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle."

CHAPTER IV.

That same night, when Ruth Colton's heart was heavy because of her father's hard words, Ralph Rendel also was in the depths of perplexity, if not despair.

His elder sister, a widow, had a son, the curse of her life. He had grown up into the years of early manhood addicted to "drink," and a petty gambler.

Several times had Ralph got him out of serious trouble and paid his debts; and the youth had promised on each occasion to reform and make a new start as to conduct and character. But the promises were not kept, his loose ways continued, the troubles consequent thereon multiplied, and he who should have been his widowed mother's mainstay filled her life with misery and woe.

And now, after idling about and doing no work for some time, and living on his mother's slender resources, he had come home in a fit of intoxication, and smashed furniture, and with blows and curses drove his mother out of her home and locked the door upon her. Naturally she took refuge under her brother's roof, and poured her pitiful tale into his ears.

Ralph was forced to the conclusion that it was no use overlooking and forgiving such conduct any more in the way it had been forgiven hitherto. But he was almost in despair what to do. He believed in the saving of a lost soul. He loved the doctrine of the Good Shepherd leaving all that were safe and going out to rescue the one stray sheep. On that principle he had acted hitherto, and forgiven much more than seven times. But apparently it had produced but little if any good. And now he was resolved that very different treatment would have to be meted out to the scapegrace.

It occurred to him that the father in the parable allowed the prodigal to go his own way, though with sorrow, and let him follow his own selfish will until the suffering of the painful results upon himself brought him back to his senses. He remembered also that Jesus taught that one member must be separated, cut off, if that is necessary for the good of the other members. And after much thought he resolved that he would be no party to his sister bearing the burden any longer, and that the young man must go his own way and no longer be permitted to hang upon her, and be also the curse of her life.

Having made up his mind to this, he told his sister.

"Mary, you must let Tim go right away. All that we've done for him up to now has been mere 'molly-coddling,' and has only made it too easy for him to carry on his bad ways. We've borne the burden long enough for his sake, and all to no purpose so far, and we must bear it that way no longer."

"But if we send him right away we are only shifting the burden of his bad habits on to other people," said Mary, in tears—"Who should bear it if we do not?"

"Why Mary, you have had much more than your proper share of bearing it, and if you have it to do much longer it will hurry you into the grave, and then who will bear it? Who has made him what he is? Not you. Bad companions, the wickedness of society—these have made him into the scapegrace that he is. It is time that society had its share of the burden, and that it should not be almost entirely put upon you. When society feels it as much as you feel it, there will perhaps be more help to prevent such heartless behaviour."

Ultimately he persuaded Mary to leave the matter in his hands. He went early next morning when Tim would have slept his drunken fit off—to settle matters with him.

He found him sitting with his head in his hands, a sad picture of wretchedness.

"What have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing," said Tim. "I must have been a madman."

"What are you going to do?"

"I had better leave the town."

"I think so, too," said Ralph. "Indeed, there's nothing else for it."

"I suppose mother cannot forgive this?"

"No more forgiveness, Tim, till you mend your ways. Until you do that forgiveness does you more harm than good. If you want to be forgiven your conduct will show it. If your heart is hardened against your mother's happiness, it is hardened also against forgiveness. Even the forgiveness of heaven cannot reach you if you shut it out by wicked and rebellious ways."

"Well, uncle, I am thoroughly ashamed of myself, and I am determined that I will be different."

"Yes, you have often said that before. But words and promises only have not been any protection of your poor mother against your neglect and ill-treatment. We must have deeds, not words."

"What then will you advise me to do, uncle?"

"Well, I'll give you a chance. A friend of mine, 50 miles away, has a large farm, and wants a strong young man who will keep steady and is willing to work. He will provide board and lodging and wages. If you will go, and keep entirely free from drink, away from all your evil companions—this should be a good opening for you."

"Suppose I don't want to go to a farm, what then?"

"You must get away into new conditions somewhere. I am going to protect my sister against any further ill-treatment from her own son. I've a right to do it. Some of the furniture you have smashed is mine, and I could summon you before the magistrates for your last night's behaviour. Your mother's home is going to be put in my name instead of hers, so that I can always have power to act. And I want you to go away until you have abstained from drink for a whole year, and not to come back until you can show twelve months' weekly deposits entered in a savings' bank book, and a twelve months' good character from an employer for steady work and good behaviour. And if there is no other opening, the place on the farm would give you a good chance."

Ultimately Tim agreed. Armed with a letter from his uncle he departed that very day, but not before asking his mother's pardon, and a sorrowful parting on both sides.

Afterwards, when someone criticised Ralph for adopting this course and shunting Tim into a fresh set of people, with the risk that they would be afflicted with his bad habits, he was not slow to defend himself.

"If a man breaks out into a condition of scarlet fever," said he," every member of the community is at once in danger of becoming afflicted by the disease, and becomes vitally interested in getting him once more into a sound and healthy state. By all suffering the danger and being made anxious to rid themselves of it, they may all become safe and secure from it. It would not be fair nor safe in such a case to leave the burden of the suffering and the work of saving to be borne by any one person only, or even by a select few. And so also with moral and spiritual disease; if one suffers all have to suffer; while any moral hell exists for one there is no real security of heavenly happiness to any others. Justice is not on a secure basis for any while it remains insecure to one. Salvation —safety—or heaven—are for all or none."

(To be continued.)

Definitions: By Centonarius.

DOGMA.—Is a Greek word signifying a command, an order (see Luke ii., 1, where "dogma" is translated "decree"). Hence it means doctrine authoritatively decreed by some society or church. It is not doctrine simply; it is doctrine officially imposed.

A principle or doctrine propounded or received on authority, as opposed to one based on experience or demonstration. (Century Dict.)

Dogmas are doctrines or creeds presented without reason, and which we are told we are bound to accept and believe on the mere authority of some priest or some church or some book. (R. A. Armstrong.)

A dogmatist is one who asserts positively doctrines or opinions unsupported by argument or evidence. (Century Dict.)

AUTHORITY.—Possessing authority means having the right to be believed and obeyed.

Men are often told that they must accept some particular theological dogma as a mystery—e.g., the Mass, the Trinity, the Deity of Christ—"on the authority" of the Pope, the Church, the Bible, etc. Unitarians refuse to acknowledge all such authority as binding, and accept other men's beliefs just so far as they seem to each individual to be reasonable and true. What appeals to a man's own reason as truth, and to his own conscience as right, possesses the only rational claim to be believed and obeyed by him.

It is man's natural right and duty to believe the intimations of his God-given reason and conscience, submitting neither the one faculty nor the other to the dictation of any man or body of men.

GOD.—It were easier for an ant to understand what man is than for a man to understand what God is. Man can give no exact definition of himself; it were, then, the height of presumption to attempt to define his Maker. "A God alone can comprehend a God" (Young). The finite cannot comprehend the Infinite. We can but suggest what is meant when we use the word.

God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. (Shorter Catechism.)

God is the perfection of power, goodness, wisdom, and love. He is the being than whom no higher can be conceived. (Rev. S. M. Crothers, D.D.)

God is the impersonation of the very highest and best man has yet conceived, and infinitely transcends that. (Rev. T. Rhondda Williams.)

How I became a Unitarian.

III.—By the Rev. J. MORLEY MILLS.

Did Jesus believe that he was the Atonement for the sins of the world? Did he teach men that he was the One Mediator between God and man through whom alone salvation could be effected? Did he even in his teaching ever imply that God would forgive only for the sake of a second person in a Trinity, or any other person? These were the serious questions with which I was confronted, when, some years ago, I was preparing to give an address, as a Wesleyan preacher, on the words: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." It was to be part of a series of sermons on the Lord's prayer.

Up to this petition I had got on all right from the Wesleyan standpoint, but with this one about forgiveness before me, and that comment upon it, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," it became as clear as noonday that there was no atonement doctrine here, nor was there any room for one! The Atonement is a fundamental doctrine in Wesleyan theology, not even a prayer being considered complete unless offered to, or in the name of, Jesus. With the thought about the passage just stated, what was I to do? Drag the Atonement into the address from some other part of the New Testament. An easy and usual thing to do? But, then, the inference! Jesus did not know how properly to pray, or he had left his own prayer incomplete! No, this plan would not do. I was in the grip of the discovery, and the questions involved would not be set aside. I must deal with them some way or other.

What I did was to try to find out what Jesus actually said on this matter. Carefully I read through the Gospels, trying meanwhile to forget any previous theological reading. Every passage which in statement, or direct implication, was clearly incompatible with a conclusion that Jesus believed in, or taught an atonement, was marked "A," which meant "against." And such passages as could by any stretch be considered "for" had an F put anent them in the margin. Then the marked passages were diligently compared. And it was found that the "F's" were few, weak, and capable of bearing other interpretations than those usually placed on them; while the "A's" were numerous, strong, clear, and quite impossible of other interpretations. Thus I was face to face with a conclusion that almost took my breath away—Jesus did not teach an Atonement doctrine, much less did he teach that He was the Atonement for the sins of the world And there were the further conclusions from this study, viz., Jesus did not believe, nor teach, that he was God. He did not teach his disciples to pray to him, but to "Our Father."

But another question had now to be encountered. What about Paul and his theology? After much consideration three things grew clear, (a) Paul's doctrinal teaching could not be reconciled with that of Jesus on this subject; (b) there could not be two firsts—either Jesus must be first in this matter, or Paul; (c) In matters of doctrine Jesus must come first. Yes, Jesus must be first. And what was Jesus to my newly realised conclusions?—a great-souled Religious Reformer, who perceived the intimate God-relationship with man, and who laboured to lead men from the "burdens too grievous to be borne" imposed by priestly conceptions of religion, into the blessed and restful freedom of direct and loving, personal contact with the Father.

Having arrived at these most heterodox conclusions, from the Wesleyan standpoint, what was I to do about my address in course of preparation? Only those cradled and reared in some fold of strict orthodoxy can understand the position. It was a most painful, a most bewildering, a most anxious predicament in which to be placed. My conscience would not allow me to go and talk platitudes, ignoring all I had decided on; nor would my vow allow me to speak such directly unorthodox conclusions from a Wesleyan pulpit. Only one course seemed clear — decline to go on with the series of addresses and resign. After a keen struggle, that was the course pursued.

Years before, I had extricated myself from the thraldom of the Eternal Torment dogma. I had ceased laying much stress on the doctrine of justification by Faith, emphasising rather the side of Salvation implied in the words of Jesus, "This do and thou shalt live." Scientific reading had weakened my faith in verbal inspiration, and now, with the doctrines of the Atonement, and the Godhead of Jesus, gone, I was truly in a parlous way.

For two years I wandered in the wilderness of doubt and negation. I tried worshipping with Congregationalists, but found it impossible. Then attendance at a place of worship was given up. After a while two considerations urged me to seek more earnestly for a religious home. One was the desire for religious fellowship growing strong again within me; and the second, the sense of apprehension concerning one's moral vigour and tone.

I had never thought of going to a Unitarian Church, for somehow it was ever with me that Unitarians held a weak and discredited position in the world. But one day, seeing a Postal Mission advertisement in a newspaper, I wrote for some of the proffered literature. A little led to more. Then I decided to go to a Unitarian Chapel to see what it was like. As the chant "So at length the true light" was sung, a new light seemed to come into my soul. All was so sweetly reasonable that I was charmed. I sought, and obtained, an interview with the minister—the Rev. Ceredig E. Jones—and was most gratified to find that his answers to my questions concerning the beliefs of Unitarians were in close agreement with conclusions I had come to largely by the reading of my New Testament. After further careful reading of Unitarian classics, I became a member of Chapel-lane Chapel, Bradford. But soon after I was doing the work of a Unitarian minister with a new enthusiasm. And for sixteen years have I been labouring with gladness to spread the joyous Gospel of Jesus, as understood by Unitarians.

Unitarian History—continued.

CHAPTER V.—THE DIVINITY OF MAN.

Now that the "New Theology" has made so much stir concerning the Divine immanence in man, it is well to remember that the essential divinity of human nature is one of the distinguishing doctrines of Unitarian Christianity.

In what sense is God the Father of all mankind? He is the Parent of the spiritual nature of man, that inner being and mysterious entity which constitutes man. The human father is parent only to the physical body, God is parent to the soul within. Just as the fleshly body of the child is the same in kind with that of its human mother and father, so the interior nature of the child — that moral and spiritual being which is itself—is the same in kind with the essential nature of God, divine as He is divine, heavenly as He is heavenly.

If this be not so, it were a mockery to speak of God as Father, or of men as His children. If they were different in kind, if the real nature of God and men were not the same, men could not be His sons nor develop in likeness to Him. But the facts of the nature of man and the nature of God themselves testify clearly that they are exactly alike in kind. The attributes of God which man discovers in the Universe: Truth, Beauty, Order, Love—these appeal to Man. He understands them, recognises them as corresponding to and having their likeness in himself. God's Truth he can naturally read, for he can think God's thoughts; the Divinely Beautiful attracts him; the sublime Order in which God works man embodies in himself; the Love which the beauty of the Universe expresses, which the providential care so eloquently declares, touches man's deepest affections, so that the desire for God becomes the greatest hunger of the human soul, and the heart of man cries out for the living God. In other words, there is divinity in man which responds to and sees its own in the divinity of God.

This doctrine of the natural divinity of man is one of the principles which distinguish Unitarian Christianity from "orthodox" Christianity. For the orthodox doctrine of the nature of man is the very opposite. It states that "man is of his own nature inclined to evil, and therefore in every person born into the world, it (man's nature) deserveth God's wrath and damnation"; that "we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable in the sight of God"; and that "we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to evil." So it is, therefore, that while Unitarian Christians believe in the natural divinity of Man, orthodox and Trinitarian Christians believe in his natural depravity.

This idea of Man's essential divinity grew in the minds of men. It has a history. That history is a record of its development into a definite opinion and a declared doctrine. But it goes back into the dim vistas of the past to periods long before written records were possible. We can only trace steps in its gradual recognition in the more recent periods when written records existed. And in them, from the earliest onwards, is manifest a consciousness of man's closest kinship to the Highest.

The record of the growth of this idea, could it be put down in completeness, would be the history of the growth of Unitarian doctrine as to the nature of man. And only a very brief outline is possible in such a sketch as there is here space for. And that outline will be given next.

(To be continued.)

Literature.

"The Faith of a Free Church," a book of ten essays by different writers, gets its title from the first essay, which is by Dr. Crothers. The Editor in his preface says that this volume "may prove helpful in removing some of the prejudices against Unitarianism which are still widely prevalent," and that "Unitarians are 'endeavouring to realise the ideal of a church of freedom and brotherly kindness without bigotry and without superstition.'" No one can read these papers and not get a clear understanding of what Unitarianism is and what a Unitarian church stands for. Published previously as Unitarian tracts, they have already had a wide circulation in a separate form. "The Religion the Age Wants," "What is a Unitarian Christian?" "The Jesus of the Gospels and the Jesus of History," "The Church, the Bible, and Freethought," "Revolt from Calvinism," "Search the Scriptures," "The God-Christ, or the Human Christ," are some of the subjects treated by such competent writers as Fletcher Williams, Crosskey, Estlin Carpenter, C. Beard, A. Webster, W. C. Bowie, and R. A. Armstrong. It is a valuable addition to a series of similar volumes most admirably fitted to spread the light which is so much needed amongst professing Unitarians, as well as amongst the "orthodox" and the unclassed. (2/- net; Essex Hall, London).

"The Perfect Life" (278 pages) is a splendid specimen of propagandist enterprise that does honour to the publishers. It is one of a fine series of sixpenny classics which include such books as Martineau's "Endeavours," Carpenter's "Gospels," and Armstrong's "God and the Soul." Considering that Channing died in 1842, before the later developments of Unitarian views, and when the New Testament record of miracles was generally and literally accepted, he is still in most respects one of the truest, if not indeed the best, of the representatives of Unitarianism. In this book we have Channing's ideas expressed in their maturest and noblest form. "God revealed in the universe and in humanity," the subject of one of these discourses, reminds us that the doctrine of the immanence of God in all men was good Unitarian doctrine when Channing was preaching his "New Theology." What an inspiration it would be in our churches if every young person over 16 years of age connected with them could be put into possession of a copy of this volume and asked to read and carefully study its pages! And why not? There could be no better way

of fanning the slumbering flames of loyalty and devotion to our Faith than such a step as that. And it would encourage the publishers, too. And our readers in the various churches and Sunday schools could make this largely possible. (6d. net; Essex Hall).

Mr. Hopps' sermon on "The Ultimate Authority in Religion" is a very helpful and lucid statement. He describes the verious external authorities which have been set up—Pope, Church, and Bible—and explains why they are not truly authoritative, putting in their place "The Living Soul"—God in each human being, and so man's own reason, conscience, and love. Brooke Herford's discourse on "How to make the best use of Sunday" is a characteristically practical and commonsense treatment of the subject, a plea for the employment of this one day at least "for Life's best uses," for the "higher side of life." (Essex Hall, 1d.)

Dr. Freeman Clarke's booklet is a second edition, the first having appeared so far back as 1872, and formed part, originally, of a volume entitled "Steps of Belief," lectures delivered in Boston, Mass., 1869, and published by the American Unitarian Association. In a prefactory note to the present edition, it is stated that this reprint now appears because "the book proved very helpful to many religious inquirers."

A helpful introduction from the pen of Dr. Sydney H. Mellone, M.A., forms a welcome addition to this issue of Dr. Clarke's pages. The subjects of the four chapters indicate the ground covered by the book, viz: I. How do we know that we have a soul? or, Materialism and Immaterialism. II.—Why do we believe in God? or, the Evidences of Theism. III.—The Atheists' Theory of the Universe. IV.—Imperfect and Perfect Theism. For plainness of language, clearness of argument, richness of illustration, and power of producing conviction by most conclusive reasoning from the facts of experience, it would be difficult to find anything to excel Dr. Clarke's treatment of these difficult questions. Many years ago the writer of this notice, when a young man in deep conflict with doubt, found in these chapters the light which he greatly needed. From a strong feeling of indebtedness he can earnestly recommend them to all who are struggling their way to find a clear and satisfying faith. (6d. net; Essex Hall).

"The Alpha Union"—explanatory pamphlet, Henderson's, 16, Paternoster Row, E.C., one penny, by post 1½d. The objects of the Union are (1) Spiritual Catholicity, and (2) The Promotion of a Higher Social Order. Its organ is "Brotherhood" with Mr. J. Bruce Wallace, M.A., as editor, and its headquarters at Letchworth (Garden City.)

Bible Passages Explained.

By Rev. WILFRID HARRIS, M.A.

Psalm 60, verse 8: "Moab is my wash-pot: over Edom will I cast my shoe."

This is a difficult passage to explain. No one seems quite sure of its exact meaning. I suggest the following as the most probable interpretation.

It was the law in Israel that, when a man died, leaving no son to inherit his property, rather than let the widow marry a stranger, the nearest kinsman had a right to claim the widow as his own wife; by this law, as you will see, the inheritance remained with the original family.

When, therefore, a widow was left who was well off, and had much property, you will understand that her husband's brother very quickly put in his claim to marry her and hand on those estates to his own children. But, on the other hand, if the widow was a very poor woman, and was badly left, and likely only to be a burden to him, you will understand that the next of kin was in no such hurry to propose to her. In this case the poor woman could summon him to a court of law. This court was held in the open air in the gate of the city.

If the man still refused to marry her, the woman had the right to publicly spit in his face, to stoop down and unloose the shoe from his foot, and saying "So shall it be done to the man that doth not build up his brother's house"; she kept the shoe as legal evidence that she was now free to marry out of the family.

Poor woman, of course, she was; and the old shoe in her hand was witness to it.

So our text may be interpreted thus: Moab, a well-watered country, is a possession worth keeping; it will at least be of some use to us; a bit of humble but useful household furniture, as though my brother had left me his wash-basin.

But Edom is poverty-stricken: like a poor widow who would be nothing but a burden: I may have a right to Edom, but—I do not want Edom. Over Edom do I cast my shoe.

References to this curious law will be found in (1) Deuteronomy xxv., 5-10, where the law is fully stated; (2) Ruth iv., 1-9, where, after one kinsman has rejected the poor girl and her small property, the next of kin agrees to take her, and the drawing off of the shoe is used in witness of this agreement. (3) Mark i., 7: "The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose."

John the Baptist speaks of himself as utterly beneath comparison with the spirit of holiness that is to come (or, as some interpret, with Jesus).

Utterly poverty-stricken are all his own efforts at preaching in comparison with the mightier preacher that cometh after him. "So poor am I," he says in effect, "that even the poor woman who stoops to unloose the shoe of the kinsman who rejects her is better off than I." She is at least akin to the man who rejects her. But alas, alas, I am not even akin to the Spirit of Holiness! I do not belong to the family of Holiness; I could not, when rejected, even stoop to unloose the shoe. Far from being kinsman of the Holy Spirit, I am but an outcast voice in the wilderness of sin. Repent.

Do we believe in Hell?

(a) No. As ordinarily understood, as a place or state of EVERLASTING AND USELESS AND HOPELESS TORMENT, Unitarians do NOT believe in Hell.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, even so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," is sufficient answer to the popular notion of Hell. The love of God has not room, and has not hate enough; and the goodness of God has not wickedness enough to make such a Hell as that.

(b) Yes. As a refining fire through which sinners may become saints. In the sense in which Jesus speaks of the tares being burnt up with unquenchable fire, and similar phrases; that is in the existence of pain and suffering which, like a fire in which gold is melted and the dross removed, cleanse God's children from wickedness and refine their spirits, many Unitarians believe in the fires of Hell.

Tears of repentance are not the drippings of cold water, but of molten metals, the hard self-will that slowly melts, and drop by drop drips into the waiting mould of the perfect will of God. The glowing river of molten souls that flow, refined, from the furnace, is a joy to the angels, and a precious stream indeed. Nor shall the fires of Hell grow cold while love remains to heat them.

THE REAL HELL.

Our WICKEDNESS will be burnt OUT of us.

This is a very different conception to the popular idea of "Hell fire," in which the wickedness is rather burnt IN, and the sinner's case made worse instead of better.

Yet, however deeply we may believe that suffering is a reality, even to the uttermost, in order to our cleansing, still, when the sinner at last does repent, let us remember "there is joy among the angels of Heaven."

Fire, in reference to spiritual things, is, of course, used figuratively. Many a man would rather burn his finger (in a literal fire) than have his sin found out and be put to shame (in a spiritual agony). The sense of BURNING SHAME is the true picture of the REAL HELL.

Religion for Young People.

By the Rev. J. A. PEARSON.

JESUS.

After the indications given in the March issue as to the different ideas of God to be found in the Old Testament, we may go forward to some consideration of the personality most interesting to all types of Christians as well as to many who do not call themselves Christians,—Jesus.

Jesus was brought up in Galilee, at Nazareth, or in the district near where Nazareth now stands, in the hill country north of the Plain of Esdraelon and about mid-way between Mount Carmel and Lake Gennesaret. At home with his father and mother he learnt his portions of Scripture, and then went, with other boys, to the village school to learn to read and perhaps to write. In due time he could take part in the synagogue worship. It is said that he followed his father's trade as a carpenter.

When Jesus was about thirty years of age news reached the village of a man who was preaching, and baptising many people in the Jordan. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" was the burden of his message.

Jesus was so much interested that he went to hear John Baptist preach, and was so deeply impressed that he was himself baptised. In the Gospel according to St. John we may gather that John Baptist recognised Jesus when he beheld the Spirit descend as a dove out of heaven and rest upon him. Jesus adopted John's message and went about declaring it. All the four Gospels agree in laying emphasis upon the baptism as the real starting point in the career of Jesus.

A strong man will not dream of trying to do everything himself. Jesus sought out and secured the allegiance of men who were to be trusted to aid him in his work of teaching and preaching, and for some three years he enjoyed the loyal support of the twelve whom he had selected. You should know the names of these men, and think of them as entering almost completely into the spirit and work of their master. Tradition has it that most of them died a violent death rather than betray the trust which he reposed in them.

Their message was their Master's message. He declared his trust in the God of the living and taught his disciples to trust him. He taught them to pray to God as "Our Father" and gave them the words of the prayer which every child of Christian parents learns as soon as ever he can shape the words. He had great hope in man and showed it by making known his sublimest thoughts and demanding of men their noblest service as, for example, when he said "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Miracles.

Forgetting that other remarkable men besides Jesus, and that evil spirits likewise, have been credited with superhuman power, miracles were once regarded as proving that Jesus was the Deity himself, and that the Christian religion was revealed from heaven; but the number of thoughtful and devout persons who feel that belief in them is not only now impossible, but rather a vexation and a hindrance to the advancement of religion, is increasing.

To believe that Jesus performed miracles does not make his teaching more beautiful and more true; the duties he enjoins, the love he would diffuse as the ground of these duties abide whether he did or did not make the blind see, and bring the dead to life. Such belief, moreover, must ever remain outside us as facts or fictions do: they cannot help us to follow the example of Jesus, and to test for ourselves the truth of what he says.—Ed Clodd.

Postal Mission Work.

By Miss FLORENCE HILL,

Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union.

We desire to remind all Postal Mission secretaries and workers of the approaching Annual Meeting of the Central Postal Mission, to be held at Essex Hall, London, on the Thursday afternoon in Whit-Week, May 23rd, at two o'clock. Miss Rawlins, of Liverpool will give an account of that branch of the work, and on this occasion also the Editor of "Unity" will speak on "Unitarian Propagandist Work in Connection with the Press." We shall be glad if all will do their utmost to make this meeting known as widely as possible. Tea will be served after the meeting and it will be an opportunity for Postal Mission correspondents and other religious inquirers to make themselves known to the postal mission secretaries of the various Postal Missions who will be present from all parts of the country.

We have had several sympathetic letters about the Van Mission which we hope to give in another issue. We note with great satisfaction that the Manchester Postal Mission at the Memorial Hall is working in connection with the van, and also the Yorkshire Postal Mission. One great difficulty which has always presented itself in Postal Mission work is the isolation of many of the correspondents; there is no Unitarian organisation at hand with which they can connect themselves. We very much hope that that Van Mission may tend to mitigate this evil.

We referred in last month's issue to the usefulness of the Postal Mission lending libraries, and the desire there is to study theological works. The following letter received a few days ago, is another illustration:—"I herewith enclose 'Modern Phases of the Atonement,' and thank you very much for your great interest in my enquiries, and I can assure you that to me and mine, and those acquaintances who also have been reading the Booklets you forwarded, you have been a means of education and have relieved us of much perplexity of mind and heart. We have all been much helped by some odd numbers of 'The Coming Day' 1900, by J. Page Hopps, which were found accidentally, and our united opinions are that the intelligent portion of our Free Churches, while in fellowship with Trinitarian Churches, are in heart and mind Unitarians, while the others are prepared to take in without question all that the ministers preach, who have subscribed their names to Trinitarian creeds, and for many reasons will not, or dare not, publicly say what they themselves know, and secretly believe to be the truth. I feel firmly convinced that these questionings which I have had and which your booklets have so well explained, are the questionings of thousands within our Churches and who dare not ask an explanation because of being misunderstood and branded as Heretic, Atheist, and the like names by the majority in the pews, who neither think nor read for themselves, and who are the shouters. I have never been to the Unitarian Chapel in Leicester, but shall certainly go there at the first opportunity. I never heard of a Unitarian publication until I saw your advertisement in the "Review of Reviews," and should like to have a list of your library books. I have never read Channings' or Martineau's works. H. Drummond and Hæckel are the best I have read, and some of Darwin's, apart from the ordinary religious publications.

If you feel disposed to advise me to some real good, helpful book from your library suitable to help such as myself who is desirous to seek,. know, and obey the truth, but a follower (as far as Unitarian books) afar off, then I shall be most happy to give such my earnest attention and consideration. I may say I am a Congregationalist and have a class of boys 15 to 17 years of age, regularly in the Sunday School, and have been a teacher 20 years. Thanking you once again, etc."

A Word to Unitarians.

At the fourth Annual Musical Festival of the Unitarian North-East Lancashire Sunday School Union, held in the Town Hall, Accrington, on Saturday, April 13th, the Rev. J. E. Jenkins, of Padiham, amongst other things spoke as follows:—

Let the Unitarians go on steadfastly with their work. There are signs on the distant horizon beckoning them to work and wait in constant faith. Let them continue to march on in the vanguard of the blessed truth, to help on the loftiest ideas of good men, bearing aloft their banner of truth and liberty loyally and faithfully. If they desired that Unitarianism should see a better future, no matter what schemes might be devised from time to time, the great point was this: Every Unitarian must do his best to be present and support Sunday services and schools, and see that their children attended and were instructed in what Unitarians believe, and that they were thoroughly grounded in and embraced the Christian faith in the interests of which their ancestors had suffered so much, trying so to instruct them that they would not grow up Unitarians in nothing. There are far too many Unitarians of that kind to-day. They were not among them. They stand aloof and do more harm than good. To be a Unitarian in any real sense is to support and spread Unitarianism, work earnestly in its behalf, live a true Christian life, and endeavour to be a living manifestation of the principles held by them, as Jesus was, of what men ought to be. With regard to the rising generation, let them give them the truth that will help them to work and live with more light and joy in a life that is manly and free.

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Notes and News.

The Editor often receives extended reports of local events from members of churches interested in our "Unity," with the request that they should be inserted in these pages, and of course he is ocmpelled regretfully to decline. If he acceded to all these requests there would be no room for anything else whatever. May we remind our readers and correspondents that "The Unity" is not published for the purpose of being a chronicle of local events, but that its special object is, to be a propagandist organ of the principles and ideas of Reasonable Religion? That object must be the principal work of the paper, and all else subordinated thereto. Local news of particular churches, Sunday schools, Bands of Hope, various anniversaries, and other events, should be sent to our weekly papers, "The Inquirer" and "The Christian Life," and where possible, inserted on the church calendar local page, or the monthly circular of the District Association. All that can be done in "The Unity" will be found in brief notes on this "Notes and News" page.

The Van Mission work begins this month. May the four vans and their missioners have a prosperous and fruitful career before them! The Editor has been already commandeered to act as missioner for the week May 30—June 6.

At the Unitarian Musical Festival, held in Accrington on Saturday, April 13th, under the auspices of the N.E. Lancashire Unitarian Sunday School Union, there was an assembly of about 600, including a combined choir of 120 from nine schools and churches in the Union, and more than 400 were provided with tea by the Accrington friends.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell's article in "The Hibbert Journal" for April, on "The Aims of the New Theology," was anticipated eagerly by many people, and it has been judged very disappointing by some and the reverse by others. There is very little in it that can be called orthodox by any interpretation, but much concerning the practical work for humanity which all reasonable theology implies and makes obligatory; and an appeal for a union of the broad-minded people of every church which deserves serious consideration.

A valuable testimony to the influence of Unitarian preachers in America comes from an orthodox University Professor (L. O. Brastow) of Yale, in a book on "The Modern Pulpit." He says that "No class of men in America have been so thoroughly committed to the interests of public morality, and none have been so reliable in their devotion to all great questions of personal and civic righteousness, and to all great questions of philanthropy, as the ministers of the Unitarian Church. . . And the Unitarians have probably done more than any other religious body to elevate the literary standard of the American pulpit."

Sir Edwin Durning Lawrence, Bart., is reported as saying: "As Unitarians we have to stand shoulder to shoulder. When his brother sought people's votes, it was known that he was a Unitarian, and when he went to the West of England for the same purpose, he went as a Unitarian, and he thought that if they stood by their Unitarianism people in the end would admire them for it."

A reader writes to the Editor saying: "Unitarianism, plain and simple, no other will do! Those who are not with us, lock, stock, and barrel, do not let us try by any means to talk as though they are Unitarians, when they are only milk and water kind of people at best. . . . . I hope we shall always bear the 'Hall Mark' where 'Thorough' is the watchword."

Mrs. Hodgson Pratt has written to "The Christian Life" saying that her late husband" was a most staunch and consistent Unitarian all his life, never shrinking from the Unitarian name."

On April 3rd, Dr. Edward Everett Hall, founder of the "Lend-a-Hand" movement in America, reached his 85th birthday.

The late Mr. Joseph Broome, of Manchester and Llandudno, has left £250 to the Unitarian Home Missionary College, and £250 to the Manchester Domestic Mission.

Between October, 1906, to March, 1907, grants of books by Unitarian writers were made in response to the applications of 62 ministers of orthodox churches, by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, London.

The Rev. E. W. Sealy, M.A., a Church of England curate of Devonport, has resigned his connection with the Established Church owing to having changed his views to those of Unitarianism, and he is about to undertake the work of the Unitarian ministry in connection with the new movement in Blackburn.

The Rev. J. H. Crooker, D.D., of Roslindale Church, Boston, Mass., has been appointed special Billings' Lecturer for the Rocky Mountain States by the American Unitarian Association.

We have been pleased to receive copies of "The World and the New Dispensation" from India, the organ of the Brahmo Somaj, which is the Christian Theistic or Unitarian movement founded by Rajah Mohun Roy, and represented so eloquently years ago by Keshub Chunder Sen and Mozoomdar. We present our compliments to the Editors, and send "The Unity" in exchange.

The meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, the Sunday School Association, the Postal Mission, and other Unitarian agencies, to be held in London during Whit-week, are certain to be of exceptional interest this year, partly on account of the preparations for the pilgrimage to America to the Boston meetings in the autumn, the growing importance also of the Van Mission, and the quickening effect of the "New Theology" agitation. The detailed programme of announcements has been delayed, and was not ready at the time this issue was going to press.

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